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## Public Baths and Their Hygienic or Sanitary Value.

J. M. McWHARF.

Public baths mean a long step toward hygiene, sanitation and national hygienic uplift. Hygienic measures are as old as the history of creation; to-day we have a more general recognition of their importance. The rapid progress of knowledge, the marvelous increase of humanity and human power over the elements and agents of nature, by means of applied science, the requirements of humanity and experiences, one and all, combine to make the duty and practicability of sanitary regulations an important factor in our lives.

Lord Palmerton, when asked to procure a royal order for a national fast in anticipation of cholera, said: "The best course which the people of this country can pursue, that the further progress of the cholera should be stayed, will be to employ the interval that will elapse between the present time and the beginning of next spring to planning and executing measures by which those portions of their towns and cities which are inhabited by the poor classes, and which, from the nature of things, must need purification and improvement, may be freed from those causes and sources of contagion which if allowed to remain will probably breed pestilence and be fruitful in death, in spite of all the prayers and fastings of a united but inactive people." A well-conceived and forceful suggestion. The best minds of the world have striven to lighten the burden of the poor and oppressed. Millions have been offered for a cure of disease, but efforts for its prevention have received tardy recognition. Experience teaches that personal cleanliness occupies the foremost rank in our consideration.

This nation is not keeping pace with the Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, Turks and the Brahmans. John Wesley recognized the civilizing influence of soap and water when he said, "Cleanliness is next to godliness."

Tacitus states that the ancient Teutons were accustomed to bathe as often as they arose. The Romans were imitators of the Greeks, but eventually surpassed them and all other nations in the extent of their baths. The excavations at Pompeii, A.D. 1824 and 1857, furnished us with an exact and realistic representation of the Roman baths; their convenient, luxurious appointments and artistic embellishments. During the time of Constantine, Rome boasted of having 856 public baths. The price of admission then averaged about one-third of a cent. Pliny, in his "*Historia Naturalis*," asserts that for 600 years Rome needed no medicine but the baths. Is it not a sad commentary upon our boasted civilization that we do not imitate those people and emulate their generosity in supplying the people with means to keep their bodies clean. We speak of those people as ignorant and barbarous, but they erected large public baths for use by the poor people.

In the fourteenth century nearly every village or town in Russia had its bathroom. A large per cent of the villages had vapor baths. This was first used; then the subjects were scrubbed with soap and water, followed by a form of massage, concluding with a thorough shower bath. In Yeddo a public bathhouse is visible at every hundred steps. Contrast these conditions with those that we usually find in our own country.

If we get a supply of water necessary to wash the hands and face from one to three times each day it is considered all that is necessary. The clothing will hide whatever of dirt that might accumulate on the rest of the body. The filthy condition of the poor is responsible to a large degree for the spread of many diseases. The so-called tenement odor, which so often offends the sensitive olfactories in crowded street cars and other assemblies of the poor, emanates from the decomposed secretions of the skin which have accumulated upon their persons and found lodgment in unventilated clothing. There is a moral obligation resting upon the wealthy portion of a community to contribute freely toward the removal of this remediable evil, uncleanness. Modern hygiene has demonstrated that the essential principles of sanitation lie in cleanliness.

We have also learned that the great panacea for the prevention of disease and premature death is in pure food, water, air, clothing, and the houses in which we live.

Doctor Mittman has shown that the crescents which adorn the finger nails of uncleanly people, their hair, skin and clothing abound in saprophytes, and that the lives of these parasites are imperiled by cleanliness and that they thrive only in filth. Every intelligent man knows that personal cleanliness is an important element in the health problem.

Personal cleanliness, so vital as a hygienic measure, must be carried to the forefront in our battle for a more perfect sanitation. Perfect compliance of all classes of people with sanitary laws will aid materially in the prolongation of human life and lessen sorrow and suffering in the world.

No argument is required to prove the necessity nor the present demand for public baths and no efforts should be instituted to thwart so great a public beneficence. Prompt action is demanded along this line of humanitarian work. Cleanliness means health; it means preservation of life; it means moral improvement; it means an uplift to all that is good and pure in the world.

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## **Color in Nature.**

J. E. TODD.

Light, like sound, consists of vibrations capable of producing a conscious impression upon sentient life. In sound they are of ordinary matter, usually air, appreciated mostly by the ear. In light they are much more delicate and mysterious vibrations of ether, which affect the eye. Color is a property of light, dependent upon the length or rapidity of such vibrations, just as pitch is a quality of sound in a similar way.

As there are soundlike vibrations which are inaudible, so there are many waves of lightlike vibrations which are invisible. Moreover, as sound may be pitched too high or be too faint for one to hear, and yet be enrapturing melody to another, so doubtless some organisms perceive delicate colors which are invisible to man. Our subject is too vast for us to consider more than the infinite variety of patterns and tints which appeal to the human eye in nature.